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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Developments in Indochina

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DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

SOUTH VIETNAM

In anticipation of a cease-fire, the Viet Cong have announced that they will emphasize united-front efforts, and they are already preparing new political front organizations.

CAMBODIA

The Mekong south of Neak Luong has now been cleared and supply convoys are moving up the river. Lon Nol has given some personal backing to his army chief of staff.

ANNEX: Tuyen Huan: Comprehensive and Bleak

The North Vietnamese published a series of articles this fall justifying "compromise in revolution" and changes in their negotiating line.

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SOUTH VIETNAM	
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the Na- tional Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam	25 X 1
(NLF) will be given a new title after a cease-fire has been signed. The new name will be the People's National Front for the Protection of Peace (PNFPP), and its primary function will be that of supervising Communist-instigated or Communist-supported political struggles. Its primary action arm will be a civilian proselyting section that will work through women's and youth groups and religious, workers', and farmers' associations to foment strikes and agitate for the formation of a coalition government.	25X1 25X1
A change in names would not be unprecedented in the history of Vietnamese Communist struggles. The Communist-led war against the French was carried out under banners of the Viet Minh alliance and the Lien Viet Front, and the party itself has changed its name from time to time. Title changes have sometimes marked a new phase in the struggle, and the new name for the NLF would be designed to raise the morale of Viet Cong members and to give the front wider appeal in a cease-fire environment.	25 X 1
Despite the precedent, there are cogent considerations that would seem to mitigate against a name change in the early period of a cease-fire. Dropping of the word "liberation" could well have an adverse effect on Viet Cong morale as long as the shooting has stopped and the Thieu government is still in control in Saigon claiming to speak for South Vietnam. The change could also have adverse repercussions in international circles where the NLF is supported and well known. The Communists plan to surface some new ancillary organization, like their Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, which could be a spearhead for	25X1 25X1
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the anti-Thieu political struggle that is expected to take on new forms after a cease-fire. If, however, the NLF is eventually to operate as the national people's front, additional evidence should be forthcoming from cadre briefings in other areas of the country.

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PRG Council Meets

The Viet Cong apparently are trying to put their political house in order in anticipation of a cease-fire. According to the southern Communists' Liberation Radio, the council of ministers of the PRG held its "first meeting" of the year on 8-10 January, at which time it laid out "guidelines and tasks for the coming days." Among the guidelines are the call for "stepping up the offensive" and a somewhat defensive statement that the Viet Cong "will be trying" to build their political and armed forces and consolidate the "revolutionary administration." Their single most important task, however, is described as strengthening Communist ties with non-Communist opponents of the US and Thieu.

These look like reasonable, although relatively modest goals. The singling out of a united-front campaign as the focus of the political effort seems noteworthy; a call for an across-the-board political struggle would be the usual all-inclusive formula. The call for a united front doubtless foreshadows a greater emphasis on this tactic by the Communists in the post-cease-fire period as they will be seeking more openly to enlist the support of a variety of political and functional groups in South Vietnam to develop opposition to Thieu.

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CAMBODIA
Government forces have completed clearing operations along both banks of the Mekong River south of the government base at Neak Luong. Cambodian Army units met no substantial resistance in reoccupying and refortifying a number of small outposts along the river that were abandoned last week. With the waterway once again under government control, regular supply convoys are resuming their run up the Mekong from South Vietnam to Phnom Penh. Northwest of Phnom Penh, some 200 soldiers were moved by helicopter on 16 January to a position within a few miles of the besieged town of Romeas. This force is to infiltrate through Communist lines to reinforce the approximately 400-man garrison defending Romeas. The five government battalions that are moving overland toward Romeas from the Route 5 area continue to make slow progress in the face of only light opposition. The local commander at Romeas has reported that some 600 well-armed and well-trained Khmer insurgents are involved in the attacks on his positions.
Channels and Corruption Lon Nol has shown some interest in promoting
Lon Nol has shown some interest in promoting greater efficiency within the military hierarchy.
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chances for exercising greater authority should improve. Fernandez may also attach some political significance to Lon Nol's comments. Earlier this month, Fernandez was dismayed by reports that Lon Nol had put some stock in rumors that he was plotting a coup. Consequently, he may tend to view Lon Nol remarks as a reaffirmation of presidential confidence.

Fernandez is continuing his efforts to crack down on military malfeasance. At least one corrupt high-ranking officer whose units have been immune from a head count because of his close ties to Lon Nol has now resentfully agreed to submit to the troop verification process. Although such a development is encouraging, Fernandez' chances for making an accurate head count of the army remain in doubt. The army's acting chief of staff for personnel, who has been involved for some time in this project, recently said that he was still unable to arrive at a firm estimate of army strength.

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ANNEX

TUYEN HUAN: COMPLEHENSIVE AND BLEAK

Rarely do the North Vietnamese let down their hair as they did in the September-October issue of Tuyen Huan, Hanoi's journal for propaganda and training cadres. This issue, which only recently became available in Washington, was designed to justify both the North Vietnamese negotiating line of early October and the agreement that Hanci clearly expected to follow. No less than 11 of its 19 articles are directly concerned with fundamental military, political, or diplomatic problems--an unusual fact in itself, since most of the articles in other issues have dealt with more trivial mat-The articles carry the usual jargon and obfuscation, but their general thrust is clear. Taken as a whole the issue provides an unusually comprehensive--and almost unrelievedly gloomy--discussion of the world as Hanoi saw it last fall.

A "Turning Point"

Tuyen Huan makes no bones about the critical nature of the period: "The revolutionary situation has reached a turning point of historic significance," claims one writer. A couple of the articles are devoted to the narrow problem of maintaining popular morale and discipline at such a time--something of immediate practical concern to the propagandists who constitute the journal's regular audience. But most of the articles have bigger fish to fry. One discusses the situation in Indochina as a whole; two deal with various aspects of Hanoi's relations with the world outside Indochina; six focus on the war itself. The general purpose of all these articles is to explain how the Communists got to the "turning point"--a turning point, the journal implicitly admits,

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that includes an unsatisfactory situation for the Communists in South Vietnam, a difficult set of circumstances on the international front, and a negotiating position in which Hanoi appeared willing to settle for less than it had been demanding for years.

Tuyen Huan's authors handle these questions with a frankness that is unusual in a Vietnamese Communist publication. In the course of the journal's lengthy discussions or South Vietnam, one author comes close to admitting that the Communists were militarily weaker than their opponents. High morale, he asserts, cannot completely offset physical weakness. "If we are to defeat the enemy.... we must, in the comparison of forces at the time (forces include morale, the ability to launch attacks, and the art of leadership) be stronger than the enemy." The writers are even more critical in their judgments on the Communists' political efforts. The political struggle, says one, is "basic" and has a "decisive effect on the success of the revolution in South Vietnam." Another asserts that although military efforts are important, the "lackey regime" cannot be made to collapse by military means alone. Indeed, if proper attention is not paid to the political side, "we surely will not win and hold the people, the land, or political power." Over and over the articles use language strongly implying that Hanoi believes something critically important has been missing from Communist political efforts in South Vietnam.

International Gloom

Problems in South Vietnam get the lion's share of Tuyen Huan's attention, but the journal has equally bleak things to say when it locks at the international scene. It expresses the same unhappiness with Peking and Moscow that has turned up elsewhere in Hanoi's media in the last year and a half, but once again Tuyen Huan's frankness is striking.

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"Serious policy disagreements" have arisen within the Communist movement, says one autior, and the US is negotiating with the Soviet Union and China in an effort to exploit these divisions, "restrain the two largest socialist countries,...bring about a detente among the major powers of the world, and continue to intimidate small countries." As a result, the writer concludes euplemistically that the war has become "more complex."

Tuyen Huan does more than reiterate in somewhat stronger fashion the earlier, none-too-veiled criticism of Moscow and Peking for their big-power maneuverings. One article makes it clear that Hanoi also has a bone to pick with both capitals over their policies toward other parts of Indochina. It acknowledges that a "problem exists among the countries of Indochina and the close, fraternal countries." This "problem," the writer asserts, will be resolved by the three Indochinese countries "free from foreign intervention." He must be referring to such specific issues as Peking's relationship with Sihanouk and the continuing presence of a Soviet Embassy in Phnom Penh, but in the background lies Hanoi's fear--rarely expressed in open forums such as this -- of Soviet and Chinese meddling in its own back yard.

The lesson Hanoi has learned in its dealings with the Soviets and the Chinese is well expressed by the title of one Tuyen Huan article: the watchword is "being self-reliant and seeking international aid at the same time." The North Vietnamese apparently are no less unhappy with the results of their broader diplomatic efforts among non-communists as well as Communists. The journal's treatment of this subject may even reflect some disagreement among the various authors. One article dealing with the "diplomatic struggle" makes claims of success that seem conspicuous for their modesty and concludes with exhortations to step up the effort. As if in rebuttal, another concludes a glowing rendition of Hanoi's diplomatic successes with the flat assertion that the anti-US front

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"has united all forces that can be united, won over all forces that can be won over." The second author could be trying to claim that whatever it is that has gone wrong, the diplomatic effort is not to blame.

Other Issues

Here and there in the journal, in fact, are passages that suggest that even more basic questions have been raised by the events of the past several months. One writer, for example, claims that "not every revolutionary situation results in a successful revolution." The critical factor, he asserts, is "knowing how to take advantage of the revolutionary situation" when the time is ripe. Carried to its conclusion, this argument implies that some fundamental errors of judgment occurred during the planning or the execution of the offensive that began last spring.

Another writer raises even more central problems. His topic is "revolutionary methods;" his line is that because of the current disarray in the world Communist movement, "numerous problems" having to do with revolutionary methods have arisen. He makes the predictable claim that Hanoi's own methods have produced "brilliant victories" in the past; he continues, however, that although problems at the strategic level in many countries have been "virtually solved," the problem of specific revolutionary tactics and methods "has not been clarified for many countries." In the midst of this jargon there seems to be a hint that Vietnam is actually one of the places where the question of tactics and methods still awaits clarification -- i.e., that at the moment the Vietnamese Communists are not sure they know how to advance their cause in the South.

Five Factors

The author of this article does list the methods that allegedly have stood Hanoi in good stead in the

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past, but the list is decidedly proforma: guerrilla war mixed with main-force war, coordination of the political and military struggles, and the like. He takes much more time describing five "fundamental matters" bearing on the success of Hanoi's methods, and his message seems to be that whatever the general value of the methods themselves, the revolution's current prospects do not look favorable when seen in the light of these five factors.

The five are indeed fundamental. One is the need for a politically effective mass movement, a need that other Tuyen Huan articles indicate is still unmet in Hanoi's eyes. The importance of "revolutionary force" is another; here, the author asserts that the critical factor is Communist dedication in the face of adversity--as though such dedication is a commodity in short supply. the opportunity" is a third, and the author suggests that under present circumstances it may be necessary to work for a long time before the opportunity presents itself. Another element is "knowing how to gradually and correctly defeat the enemy"--a factor that apparently is concerned mainly with the need for "extreme flexibility" as the revolution progresses and faces new challenges.

Most striking of all is the fifth prerequisite:
"The revolution can only break out where there is a revolutionary situation." The author follows this seemingly obvious statement with a historical homily to the effect that most successful revolutions have occurred in conjunction with world wars, but that if the world Communist movement had followed the correct line, revolutions could have succeeded even in the absence of a world war. The clear implication is that because the bipolar relationships of the cold war have changed, a "revolutionary situation" does not exist—not in the world as a whole and therefore not in Vietnam either.

This author thus seems to conclude that current circumstances both inside and outside Vietnam call into question, at least for now, the efficacy of the "revolutionary methods" that have served the Communists up to now. Like most of his colleagues' arguments, his rationale deflects responsibility for the current situation away from the top leadership in Hanoi; his finger is pointed at the world Communist movement, other writers blame political cadres in South Vietnam. There are many seeds for further argument, however, and the repercussions of the anguish reflected in Tuyen Huan could be broad and deep. Even in this issue there are passages that could have polemical overtones. To take just one example, one author quotes Le Duan on the importance of the leadership's "correct line." Is he touting the party's infalliability, or could he be throwing the first secretary's words back in his face?

Tuyen Huan's Prognosis

For now Tuyen Huan's line is clear. "Although we have won great victories," says one author, "we have not won enough victories to force the US imperialists to meet the legitimate, basic demands of our people" -- thus justifying in one sentence the Communists' compromises last fall. Another, quoting Lenin, says that what all revolutionaries must aim for is "the greatest possible victory permitted by the balance of forces at each point in time." Final victory is a long way off; indeed, one model for the present era is the 1945-46 period, when Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic efforts "dispersed and isolated the enemy and won us time to prepare for a long war of resist-The struggle is going to revert to the level of years past, with nothing approaching the emphasis on main-force warfare of the past several months. Indeed, the struggle in the South can expect less help from the North in the future; "South Vietnam must rise by itself; ... South Vietnam cannot passively rely on North Vietnam." Even at reduced levels of aid, however, the demands on the North will be extensive: "On the road to total victory we will have to make many more sacrifices and endure many more hardships."

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